

August 2016

PPTA survey on middle leadership in secondary schools, 2016: Research report

Summary

This report details one aspect of the investigation work of PPTA's Middle Leadership Taskforce, a survey of members conducted in early 2016. The survey revealed that curriculum middle leadership lacks appeal to 40% of classroom teachers, and the reasons for this appear to be excessive workload for the time available, and remuneration levels which fail to adequately recognise the workload and levels of responsibility. The initial attractions of the role are largely around increased influence over the curriculum, but curriculum middle leaders find themselves spending time on matters that are only indirectly related to the curriculum such as performance appraisal, digital developments, and quality assurance for NCEA. Pastoral care middle leaders, i.e. Deans, also report excessive workload and inadequate remuneration.

1 Background

1.1 The survey was one element of a range of investigations being conducted by PPTA's Middle Leadership Taskforce. This Taskforce arose from a PPTA Annual Conference decision in 2014 to establish a Taskforce:

...to review the role of middle leaders in secondary schools with a particular focus on contribution to achievement, remuneration, responsibilities, status and job size.

1.2 Other aspects of the Taskforce's investigations will include focus groups and branch and regional submissions on a discussion paper, leading to an annual conference paper in 2017.

2 The survey

- 2.1 The survey was conducted between mid-February and mid-March, 2016. 13,394 PPTA members with valid current emails were invited to participate, regardless of whether they were in a middle leadership position or not. 4098 responses were received, i.e. a 31% response rate, very high for online surveys of this kind.

3 Findings

- 3.1 The data has been analysed according to responses to the question “What is your current role in your schools? (Please choose one answer only.)” The option of classroom teacher was deliberately qualified as “with no specific leadership responsibilities” to guide people holding multiple roles, e.g. careers advisors, to choose the named role for which they would normally be receiving some kind of extra remuneration and time.
- 3.2 Responses were received from members in the full range of roles, as follows:

| Current role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Classroom teacher with no specific leadership responsibilities | 1,003 | 25% |
| Teacher in charge of a subject, or a level in a subject | 774 | 19% |
| Head of Department/Faculty/Learning Area | 989 | 24% |
| Dean | 302 | 7% |
| Specialist role e.g. guidance counsellor, careers advisor | 191 | 5% |
| Senior leader e.g. principal, DP, AP | 283 | 7% |
| Other | 556 | 14% |

3.3 Classroom teachers

- 3.3.1 The survey included questions for classroom teachers about whether they had ever been, or had aspirations to be, curriculum middle leaders or not, and their reasons.
- 3.3.2 All classroom teachers were asked whether they would like to be a curriculum middle leader in the future. Their responses were as follows:

| Want to be a curriculum middle leader in future? | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 306 | 31% |
| Maybe | 287 | 29% |
| No | 400 | 40% |

- 3.3.3 The attractions of the role for those who answered Yes or Maybe to the above question were as follows (organised in order of importance, multiple responses allowed):

| Attractions of curriculum middle leadership role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Having more influence over the way my subject is taught | 379 | 65% |
| Acting as a passionate advocate for my subject | 362 | 62% |
| Having more influence over the content of my subject | 314 | 53% |
| A way to gain leadership experience | 305 | 52% |
| I think I have a lot to offer to the role | 281 | 48% |
| Extra pay | 253 | 43% |
| Step on pathway to senior leadership | 141 | 24% |
| Extra time | 129 | 22% |
| Less teaching | 62 | 11% |
| Other | 26 | 4% |

3.3.4 It is interesting that the two most significant appeals for teachers are professional ones, in the form of influencing and advocating for their subject. Extra pay is a relatively small attraction, and very few saw curriculum leadership as being attractive as part of a career pathway, or as offering more time and less classroom work.

3.3.5 For the 40% of classroom teachers who answered No, they would not like to be a curriculum leader in the future, their reasons were as follows (organised in order of importance, multiple responses allowed):

| Reasons for not wanting to be a curriculum middle leader | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| The workload is too high for the time provided | 277 | 65% |
| The pay increase doesn't sufficiently reward the extra responsibility | 228 | 54% |
| I would have to do too much paperwork/administration | 200 | 47% |
| It would have an adverse effect on my work-life balance | 197 | 46% |
| I am near the end of my career and not seeking extra responsibility | 123 | 29% |
| I love classroom teaching and don't want to do less of it | 143 | 34% |
| I am more interested in pastoral care than curriculum leadership | 79 | 19% |
| I don't want to be in charge of other people | 63 | 15% |
| Other | 24 | 6% |

3.3.6 For these respondents, the conditions of the position (workload, pay, paperwork, and effect on work-life balance) were the significant disincentives to aspiring to be curriculum middle leaders.

3.4 Classroom teachers who are former curriculum leaders

3.4.1 Among the classroom teachers was an interesting subgroup, classroom teachers who had previously held a curriculum leadership role (i.e. TIC, HOD, HOF, HOLA) but left the role to return to being a classroom teacher. This subgroup was large: 375 of the 1,003 current classroom teachers, i.e. 37%. When asked "Would you like to be a classroom leader in the future?" their responses were as follows:

| Want to return to curriculum middle leadership in future? | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 79 | 22% |
| Maybe | 94 | 25% |
| No | 202 | 54% |

3.4.2 When asked their reasons for not wanting to return to the role of curriculum leader in the future, the 202 respondents who had given a definite “No” gave their reasons as follows (organised in order of importance, multiple responses allowed):

| Reasons for not wanting to return to curriculum middle leadership | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| The workload is too high for the time provided | 141 | 68% |
| The pay increase doesn't sufficiently reward the extra responsibility | 122 | 58% |
| I would have to do too much paperwork/administration | 105 | 50% |
| It would have an adverse effect on my work-life balance | 104 | 50% |
| I am near the end of my career and not seeking extra responsibility | 88 | 42% |
| I love classroom teaching and don't want to do less of it | 61 | 29% |
| I am more interested in pastoral care than curriculum leadership | 32 | 15% |
| I don't want to be in charge of other people | 28 | 13% |
| Other | 18 | 9% |

3.4.3 On the other hand, 173 chose either “Yes” or “Maybe” to the question about whether they would like to be a curriculum leader in the future. Their reasons for being attracted to returning to the role of curriculum leader in the future were as follows (organised in order of importance, multiple responses allowed):

| Attractions of curriculum middle leadership role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Having more influence over the way my subject is taught | 122 | 72% |
| Acting as a passionate advocate for my subject | 106 | 62% |
| I think I have a lot to offer to the role | 93 | 55% |
| Having more influence over the content of my subject | 91 | 54% |
| Extra pay | 69 | 41% |
| A way to gain leadership experience | 62 | 37% |
| Extra time | 38 | 22% |
| Step on pathway to senior leadership | 34 | 20% |
| Less teaching | 25 | 15% |
| Other | 6 | 4% |

3.5 Curriculum middle leaders

3.5.1 1,763 of the respondents (43% of the total sample) held some kind of curriculum middle leadership role. These were as follows:

| Role | Number | % |
|---|--------|-----|
| Teacher in charge of a subject | 571 | 32% |
| Teacher in charge of a level of a subject | 203 | 12% |
| Head of Department | 623 | 36% |
| Head of Faculty/Learning Area | 364 | 21% |

3.5.2 These current curriculum leaders were asked what had attracted them to becoming a curriculum leader in the first place. For this question, there are no multiple responses, they were told to “Choose the answer that best applies”.

| Attractions of curriculum middle leadership role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Ability to have more influence over the teaching of my subject | 538 | 31% |
| I thought I had a lot to offer in the role | 357 | 21% |
| I was leaned on to apply because there was no-one else available | 153 | 9% |
| A way to gain leadership experience | 150 | 9% |
| I was encouraged by a colleague to apply | 153 | 7% |
| A step on the pathway to senior leadership | 93 | 5% |
| Extra pay | 60 | 4% |
| Less classroom teaching | 10 | 1% |
| Extra time | 8 | 1% |
| Other | 233 | 14% |

3.5.3 The two most predominant reasons, chosen by 52% of the respondents, were influence over the subject or feeling they had a lot to offer, which presumably was because of subject expertise and/or leadership ability. Other motivations, such as leadership experience or career aspirations, extra pay or time were chosen by very few respondents.

3.5.4 In the ‘Other’ category, almost all of the answers were not so much “attractions” as a feeling that there wasn’t much choice, such as:

A need in the school for someone to take on the role.

I am the only teacher of my subject in my school

Only teacher of Te Reo Maori in the school

I was the only one available in a small school.

I was trapped into it.

In my subject area often the only jobs going involve being TIC or HOD. Otherwise no job.

I am the only teacher in my subject area, so it falls to me to be TIC although I don't receive any benefits for this.

3.5.5 A few other answers were more genuinely “attractions”:

I was ready for more challenge.

My development of the programme led me to the role.

Job security as uncertainty over assistant position with falling role, plus a chance to develop more career opportunities.

I was told there had only been one applicant (from outside the school) and I knew I could do a better job than he could so was encouraged to apply. I had only been teaching 2 1/2 years and had 1 year off for Maternity leave.

Seeing that the sound processes and structure of the department were maintained.

Sorry, can't put them all...overseas ...wanted to return to NZ...applied for this and got it. Think I have a lot to offer...wanted to have more control over things.

My HOD left and I had to apply or be managed by an unknown HOD. HOD's are now called LOL's without extra pay or time. (LOL = Leaders of Learning). I have tried to give the job away this year but nobody else wants it.

I needed to apply for a promotion in order for the Ministry to pay for my move to another city.

Natural career progression with maturity - lot to offer with my varied experience - ability to have more influence in teaching of subject - extra pay - a range of reasons, no one answer applies.

I knew I was capable and had a lot to offer, wanted to have more influence in my subject and felt that others who may have also wished to do the job did not have the experience or skills I possess and I did not wish to be subordinate to them.

I started a new subject – Philosophy - which was not previously offered at my school. I did this as I am very interested in the subject and thought it would be good for students. I don't get any extra pay or time allowance, but I enjoy preparing and teaching it.

I was unhappy at my previous school and this job came up. I knew I had the skills to do it. Extra money? What a joke. Extra time? One spell per week - another joke.

- 3.5.6 Those who had been in the role for one year or more (1,529 respondents, 87% of the curriculum middle leaders) were presented with a list of changes that PPTA has heard middle leaders mention as having had a negative impact on their role. They were asked to rate these as follows: “Over the last five years, please rate each aspect on its negative impact on your ability to do the role to your satisfaction”. They were given a rating scale with four positions: no negative impact, small negative impact, moderate negative impact, or major negative impact. The table below shows in order how the respondents ranked these changes, using weighted averages:

| Change | Weighted average |
|---|-------------------------|
| Changes in performance appraisal requirements | 2.73 |
| Changes in demands round digital technologies | 2.57 |
| Changes in NCEA quality assurance requirements | 2.56 |
| Changes in availability of suitable staff | 2.45 |
| Changes in data management and BOT reporting requirements | 2.44 |
| Changes in curriculum expectations | 2.33 |
| Changes in type and frequency of reporting to parents | 2.14 |
| Changes in assessment requirements in the junior school | 2.13 |

3.5.7 The high ratings for changing performance appraisal requirements, demands around digital technologies, and NCEA quality assurance requirements were not surprising to PPTA, however the high rating of availability of suitable staff was less expected.

3.5.8 Curriculum middle leaders were also asked to rate a range of remuneration issues, but a smaller level of differentiation appeared here:

| Remuneration issue | Weighted average |
|---|-------------------------|
| The number of units and/or MMAs available to allocate | 2.86 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of units and MMAs across subjects | 2.76 |
| The transparency of the allocation of units and MMAs in my school | 2.76 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of units between middle and senior leadership | 2.71 |
| The value of an individual MMA | 2.70 |
| The value of an individual unit | 2.69 |

3.5.9 A further question asked curriculum leaders to rate a range of time allocation issues, and here a clear pattern emerged, with “The sheer size of the workload expected of middle leaders” coming well ahead of other issues.

| Time allocation issue | Weighted average |
|--|-------------------------|
| The sheer size of the workload expected of middle leaders | 3.46 |
| The STCA allocation of non-contact for unit holders | 2.86 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of non-contacts between middle and senior leaders | 2.59 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of other responsibilities between curriculum leaders | 2.52 |
| The STCA allocation of non-contact for HODs with beginning teachers | 2.26 |

3.5.10 Curriculum middle leaders were also asked to rank, in order, nine tasks for a curriculum leader according to which ended up getting the most attention down to the least. The question specified that this ranking was to be the actual priority order, rather than what they would wish to have as their priority order. The order, using a weighted average of the rankings, was as follows:

| Task | Weighted average |
|---|-------------------------|
| Planning and monitoring spending | 6.29 |
| Doing appraisal visits and interviews | 6.02 |
| Doing your own professional learning | 5.72 |
| Crisis management e.g. when there are staffing issues | 5.40 |
| Data analysis and BOT reporting | 5.07 |
| Mentoring new and existing teachers | 5.02 |
| NCEA quality assurance processes | 4.05 |
| Initiating and planning curriculum change and development | 3.79 |
| Preparation for your own classroom teaching | 3.64 |

3.5.11 It is a concern that financial management is well ahead in actual priority order of anything else. The fact that doing appraisal visits and interviews comes in second might reflect quality time spent on educational leadership of colleagues, but in some cases it might be more of a compliance exercise. Without further investigation, it is difficult to know. It is pleasing that doing one's own professional learning appears to high on the priority order, however.

3.5.12 It is a reflection of the huge tension between trying to be an excellent classroom teacher at the same time as doing a good job of curriculum middle leadership that "Preparation for your own classroom teaching" ended up at the bottom of middle leaders' priorities. When not enough time is provided for the middle leadership role, but the demands are unremitting, then it is inevitable that preparation for classroom teaching will receive much less attention than these leaders no doubt wish they could give to it.

3.5.13 It is also tragic that the kind of work which attracted these people to the role in the first place, i.e. "Initiating and planning curriculum change and development", ranked second lowest on the list of actual priorities. It is now wonder that curriculum middle leaders are experiencing significant stress.

3.5.14 Curriculum middle leaders were also asked to rank a range of sources of professional support. The question specified that this ranking should be about "what is actually available to you (rather than what you would like to be available)". This caused some respondents difficulty, because they had to rate all items, and some of the items on the list were actually unavailable to them but still had to be ranked. (We assume that they ranked those items at the bottom.)

3.5.15 While this means that the data is not as useful as it might be, it is still reasonable to assume that the items that were ranked high are sources of support that are valuable to curriculum leaders. The order, using a weighted average of the rankings, was as follows:

| Source of support | Weighted average |
|--|------------------|
| Curriculum leaders in other schools | 5.91 |
| Curriculum advisers e.g. through PLD contracts | 5.63 |
| Personal friends/family | 5.50 |
| Members of your senior leadership team | 5.40 |
| Your subject association | 4.97 |
| Teachers in your subject area/learning area in other schools | 4.83 |
| Other curriculum leaders in your own school | 4.58 |
| Online materials, listservs etc. | 4.54 |
| Teachers in your subject area/learning area in your own school | 3.84 |

3.6 New curriculum middle leaders

3.6.1 9% (152) of the curriculum middle leaders had been in their positions for less than one year. They were asked “How well prepared do you believe you are for your new role as a curriculum leaders?” Their answers were quite positive, as follows:

| Level of preparation | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Very well prepared | 23 | 15% |
| Moderately well prepared | 94 | 62% |
| Not at all well prepared | 29 | 19% |
| Other | 6 | 4% |

3.6.2 They were then asked “What kind of preparation for curriculum leadership roles would you like to see available?” This question allowed them to choose all responses that applied:

| Kind of preparation | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|---------------------|----------------|
| A special extra time allowance for new curriculum leaders | 93 | 62% |
| Externally provided training programmes for aspiring curriculum leaders | 85 | 57% |
| Formal programmes for in-school mentoring of new curriculum leaders | 69 | 46% |
| Advisers with the role of supporting new curriculum leaders | 51 | 34% |
| Improved access to university courses in curriculum leadership | 31 | 21% |
| Other | 10 | 7% |

3.6.3 Responses under the ‘Other’ category included the following:

Managers in the teaching profession need proper HR training as people management skills are generally extremely poor. Most teachers have never worked in the real world and thus treat their staff in a similar way to the way they talk to students.

Better job descriptions - possibly supported by a generic document from MoE/PPTA setting out what a curriculum leader might be expected to do and how that fits with in and out of school time allowances and expectations.

Strategies on challenging aspects.

An in-school mentor who is given some time to support me.

Network with other subject teachers from other schools because it is a rare subject (psychology).

Subject-specific training eg. Outdoor Ed.

I am acting HoD of a large core subject and am not receiving any time allowance in spite of the department having 22 full time teachers.

3.7 Senior leaders

3.7.1 283 respondents (7% of the sample) were senior leaders, i.e. principals, deputy principals or assistant principals. Nearly all of these respondents had been curriculum leaders prior to becoming senior leaders. Eleven of the senior leaders still held curriculum leadership roles, as HODs, Teachers in Charge, etc. as well as their senior leadership roles. (Presumably most of these were in small schools where it is not uncommon for people to hold multiple roles.)

3.7.2 Senior leaders were asked whether they would like to be curriculum leaders in the future, and their responses were interesting in that nearly half of the senior leaders (45%) would like, or would consider, being a curriculum middle leader again in the future:

| Like to be a curriculum middle leader again in the future? | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 61 | 22% |
| Maybe | 64 | 23% |
| No | 154 | 55% |

3.7.3 When those who had answered “Yes” or “Maybe” to the above were asked what attracted them to the role of curriculum middle leader, their responses were as follows:

| Attractions of curriculum middle leadership role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|---------------------|----------------|
| Acting as a passionate advocate for my subject | 76 | 64% |
| Having more influence over the way my subject is taught | 73 | 61% |
| Having more influence over the content of my subject | 58 | 49% |
| I think I have a lot to offer to the role | 49 | 41% |
| Extra pay | 27 | 23% |
| A way to gain leadership experience | 26 | 22% |
| Step on pathway to senior leadership | 23 | 19% |
| Extra time | 10 | 8% |
| Less teaching | 9 | 8% |
| Other | 15 | 13% |

3.7.4 Some of the responses here suggest that these senior leaders missed the intent of the question, e.g. it is surprising that anyone in a senior leadership role would see

curriculum middle leadership as a way of earning extra pay! Leaving that aside, it is clear that the role, for people looking back to their past when they have been curriculum middle leaders, still has attractions in terms of influence over their specialist subjects.

- 3.7.5 Some of the answers in the 'Other' category were interesting in that respect, and raise questions about whether some senior leaders don't feel they have a sufficient role in leading learning in their schools:

Influencing learning and teaching philosophy and practices in our school and creating a responsive structure that suits all learning styles and offers all students prospects for their futures.

I want to build a succinct and unique learning program.

Like to have input into making teaching and learning more engaging, relevant, etc.

Helping to be a part of whole-student success and lifting the culture of our school.

- 3.7.6 Two respondents saw middle leadership as less stressful than senior leadership.

- 3.7.7 For the 154 senior leaders who chose No, they would not wish to be curriculum middle leaders in the future, their reasons were as follows:

| Reasons for not wanting to return to curriculum middle leadership | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| I am in a senior leadership role | 152 | 93% |
| The workload is too high for the time provided | 30 | 18% |
| The pay increase doesn't sufficiently reward the extra responsibility | 25 | 15% |
| I am near the end of my career and not seeking extra responsibility | 14 | 9% |
| I am more interested in pastoral care than curriculum leadership | 12 | 7% |
| I love classroom teaching and don't want to do less of it | 7 | 4% |
| I would have to do too much paperwork/administration | 5 | 3% |
| It would have an adverse effect on my work-life balance | 5 | 3% |
| Other | 4 | 3% |

- 3.7.8 It is hardly surprising that the major reason was being in a senior leadership role currently. However, it is interesting that senior leaders, like current curriculum middle leaders, see middle leadership as having too high a workload for the time provided, and insufficient pay for the extra responsibility. Comments under 'Other' included the following:

Having been in this position and seen how it continues to evolve, it is challenging how much pressure and responsibility there is at the curriculum leader level. There is no doubt that this is one of the critical areas of leadership responsibility in the school. While we do the best that we can to reward our curriculum leaders with time and management units, so much still hinges on their commitment, enthusiasm and dedication to their students.

This is largely as it should be because it ensures that the people with the right attitude are in these positions but I often wish there was additional resourcing to support and recognise at this level. For example, due to the size of our school I am only able to offer two MUs for the curriculum leaders. They work as hard, if not harder, than other people who get four MUs in other schools. I do not believe that I would return to a position of curriculum leader having experienced and now seen how hard they work.

It is probably one of the loneliest roles in teaching.

3.8 Pastoral care middle leaders (Deans)

3.8.1 The following data covers respondents who are Deans (302), which can be seen as a different kind of middle leadership from curriculum work.

3.8.2 Deans were asked what most attracted them to the role of Dean. As with a similar question to curriculum middle leaders, there are no multiple responses, because respondents were told to “Choose the answer that best applies”.

| Attractions of pastoral care middle leadership role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| I enjoy pastoral care roles | 123 | 41% |
| I thought I had a lot to offer in the role | 54 | 18% |
| A way to gain leadership experience | 38 | 13% |
| A step on the pathway to senior leadership | 28 | 9% |
| I was encouraged by a colleague to apply | 20 | 7% |
| I was leaned on to apply because there was no-one else available | 8 | 3% |
| Extra pay | 5 | 2% |
| Less classroom teaching | 2 | 1% |
| Other | 23 | 8% |

3.8.3 Overwhelmingly, respondents’ reasons for being attracted to the role of Dean were about their enjoyment of that kind of work. Reasons such as feeling they had a lot to offer, or career aspirations, were chosen by far fewer respondents. Intriguingly, the possibilities of extra pay or less classroom teaching were chosen by almost no-one, and no-one at all chose the response offered “Extra time”. Many of the 23 respondents who chose “Other” explained that they did so because a number of the options applied to them, for example one respondent wrote:

There were several reasons but since I don't appear to be able to tick multiple boxes I will write them. I enjoy pastoral care roles. A step on pathway to senior leadership, and I thought I had a lot to offer in the role.

3.8.4 A number referred to the challenge and interest of the role, including the following comments:

I was interested in the challenge and also the variety that deaning adds to the role of a teacher.

There is a need to improve the transition to secondary school and being the Year 9 Dean was ideal to target this transition.

I took this job because my passion is working with students and supporting them in their learning. I am the dean for all Maori and Pasifika students from year 9-13.

I had observed that if there were barriers to learning, all the other stuff was completely pointless.

I also thought I had a lot to offer in terms of age and experience with teaching and guiding teenagers.

3.8.5 One respondent's comment added new light to the option "I was leaned on to apply":

Appointed, then told!

3.8.6 Deans were asked about what the biggest remuneration issues were for them. As with the curriculum middle leaders, who were asked the same question, there is not much to distinguish between the various issues:

| Remuneration issue | Weighted average |
|---|-------------------------|
| The number of units and/or MMAs available to allocate | 2.94 |
| The transparency of the allocation of units and MMAs in my school | 2.80 |
| The value of an individual unit | 2.79 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of units between middle and senior leadership | 2.71 |
| The value of an individual MMA | 2.68 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of units and MMAs across the pastoral care team | 2.41 |

3.8.7 On the other hand, there is a clearer pattern in relation to the biggest time allocation issues for Deans, with the weighted average for size of workload coming well above the weighted average for other possible answers:

| Time allocation issue | Weighted average |
|---|-------------------------|
| The sheer size of the workload expected of middle leaders | 3.50 |
| The STCA allocation of non-contact for unit holders | 2.76 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of non-contacts between middle and senior leaders | 2.65 |
| The fairness in my school of allocation of other responsibilities between deans | 2.37 |

3.8.8 A significant percentage of the Deans have ambitions to move to curriculum middle leadership roles in the future:

| Want to be a curriculum middle leader in future? | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 114 | 40% |
| Maybe | 82 | 29% |
| No | 88 | 31% |

3.8.9 The attractions of the curriculum middle leadership role for these people who are currently Deans are generally similar to the classroom teachers who would like to be curriculum middle leaders, although there are slight differences. Subject passion comes highest for this group, just as it does for classroom teachers and current curriculum middle leaders:

| Attractions of curriculum middle leadership role | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Having more influence over the way my subject is taught | 114 | 58% |
| Acting as a passionate advocate for my subject | 109 | 55% |
| A way to gain leadership experience | 101 | 51% |
| I think I have a lot to offer to the role | 83 | 42% |
| Having more influence over the content of my subject | 80 | 41% |
| Step on pathway to senior leadership | 57 | 29% |
| Extra pay | 51 | 26% |
| Extra time | 25 | 13% |
| Less teaching | 14 | 7% |
| Other | 7 | 4% |

3.8.10 For the 88 respondents who would not like to be a curriculum leader in the future, the main reason, well above all others, is that they are more interested in pastoral care work than curriculum leadership:

| Reasons for Deans not wanting to be a curriculum middle leader in future | Number of responses | % of responses |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| I am more interested in pastoral care than curriculum leadership | 65 | 66% |
| The workload is too high for the time provided | 49 | 48% |
| I would have to do too much paperwork/administration | 40 | 41% |
| It would have an adverse effect on my work-life balance | 34 | 35% |
| The pay increase doesn't sufficiently reward the extra responsibility | 32 | 33% |
| I love classroom teaching and don't want to do less of it | 18 | 18% |
| I am near the end of my career and not seeking extra responsibility | 15 | 15% |
| I am in a senior leadership role | 6 | 6% |
| I don't want to be in charge of other people | 5 | 5% |
| Other | 2 | 2% |

4 Conclusions

It is clear that many teachers, including principals, do not regard curriculum middle leadership as attractive. There is a perception that the pressures on curriculum middle leaders have increased over recent years, and that there is now a significant misfit between the time and remuneration available for the role and the demands it poses.

It is interesting that curriculum middle leaders identify changes in performance appraisal requirements as the biggest pressure on them. While curriculum leadership (“Ability to have more influence over the teaching of my subject”) was by far the most important attraction of the role, it seems unlikely that middle leaders see meeting increased performance appraisal requirements contributing to that. It is also notable that the areas that curriculum middle leaders end up spending most of their time on are managing budgets and appraisal, neither of which could be seen to be focused on influencing the teaching of their subjects.

On the other hand, the kind of work that attracted them to the role in the first place, leading the teaching and curriculum development of the department, ends up way down the priority ranking in terms of actual use of time, as does preparation for their own classroom teaching. There is clearly a need to develop policy that enables curriculum middle leaders to spend adequate time on the issues that drove them to apply for these roles in the first place.

Unfortunately, the survey did not ask classroom teachers whether they had aspirations to be deans, so we don’t know whether this is a more attractive role than curriculum middle leadership. It is clear, however, that for many Deans there are pressures not dissimilar to those experienced by curriculum middle leaders, in terms of the time available being insufficient to do the job well.